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XIII.—*Notes on the Sea-birds observed during a Voyage in the Antarctic Ocean.* By E. L. LAYARD, Corr. Memb. Z.S.L., Secretary to the S. African Museum, Cape-town.

WE left Cape-town on the 15th August, in H.M.S. 'Cossack.' As soon as we cleared the bay, I noted *Daption capensis*, *Procellaria æquinoctialis*, *Diomedea melanophrys*, and a little blue Petrel, which I take to be *Prion vittatus*. This last never came within 100 or 150 yards of the vessel during the whole voyage (for we frequently saw them), but skimmed about among the waves, generally in the trough of the sea, which was at times very rough. I never saw it alight on the water, as did *Daption capensis* and *Procellaria mollis*, which joined us before we lost sight of land. *Procellaria æquinoctialis* left us on the second day (lat. 37° S., long. 22° E.)*, and we saw no more of it. It was replaced by *Proc. gigantea* in lat. 41° S., long. 46° E. In its company arrived *Diomedea fuliginosa* (the Black Albatros), from which it is easily distinguished by its flesh-coloured bill and more rounded tail, whereas *D. fuliginosa* has a black bill and a cuneiform tail.

In these latitudes we were also joined by *D. chlororhyncha* in abundance, *D. melanophrys* still sticking to us, and by a single specimen of *D. exulans* in the brown plumage of the first year. *Prion vittatus* (?) and *Daption capensis* were also with us, the latter being abundant. We caught very many with strong thread, by letting it trail astern with a cork at the end of it. The birds

* All the latitudes and longitudes given refer to our position at noon of each day,

fouled the line, which twisted in their wings and thus rendered them helpless. As soon as one was entangled it fell in the water, and the rest immediately clustered round it, as the sailors declared, for the purpose of eating their wounded comrade.

Procellaria gigantea and *Diomedea melanophrys* took the hook freely when we were not going through the water. None of these birds that I skinned exhibited the usual fatness of sea-fowl, and the ovaries were not in the least enlarged. I thought the breeding season had not begun; but H. E. Sir G. Grey considered that they had passed it, and were feeding their young, which would account for their lean condition. Doubtless they all breed on the islands hereabouts—St. Paul's, Amsterdam, Kerguelen's Land, &c.; but it must be very cold work, for though we are now in what may be called the spring, still we have very severe weather and frequent storms of hail, snow and sleet.

Lat. 42° S., long. 85° E.—This morning a large bird of a deep-brown colour hovered once or twice round the ship. I at first thought, from its heavy flapping flight and rounded wing, that it was a land-bird, but it suddenly pursued some of the Petrels with the unmistakeable flight of the *Lestris*. It then settled on the water far astern, and presently rose again and went away out of sight westward (towards the islands). I conjectured it must have been the *Lestris antarcticus*, which I see, according to Dieffenbach, is found in New Zealand; and on describing it to H. E. Sir G. Grey, he agreed with me. Being the 1st of September to-day, it ought to have been *Perdix cinerea*!

There is also to-day a black or deep-brown bird occasionally about, which must be a *Puffinus*, judging from the falcate wing and the general appearance when compared with other *Procellariidæ*.

Lat. 43° S., long. 107° E.—The small blue Petrel (*Prion vittatus*?) is very abundant here, but never comes near the ship. This species may be known by the W-like mark on the back when the wings are extended in flight.

Lat. 44° S., long. 138° E.—Birds in sight to-day—*Dapt. capensis*, *Proc. mollis*, *P. glacialis* (one specimen), *Prion vittatus* (?), *Proc. gigantea*, *Diom. exulans* (young), *D. chlororhyncha*,

D. melanophrys, and *D. fuliginosa*. *Daption capensis* dives readily; *Proc. mollis* does not. I have seen *D. capensis* drop suddenly on the water, and dive under instantly. It will also throw its tail up like a duck, and fish up bits of food from a slight depth.

16th September. Running along the south coast of Van Diemen's land.—*Daption capensis* is here in vast numbers; there must have been 200 round us at a time. *Proc. mollis* nearly gone from us. *Proc. glacialis* (one specimen) came close under the stern, and we nearly caught it several times. The *Puffinus* before named, as also *Proc. gigantea* and *Diom. fuliginosa*, occur sparingly. *D. exulans* (two adults) paid us a visit, and spent the day with us; and two little *Thalassidromæ* patted over the water some way astern.

September 22. Halfway between Van Diemen's Land and New Zealand.—*Puffinus* ——? very plentiful. H. E. Sir G. Grey says they are the "Mutton Bird*." *Diom. exulans* and *D. melanophrys* very common. *D. chlororhyncha* has, I think, quite left us: it may be known at once from *D. melanophrys* by its head being of a slate colour, this part in *D. melanophrys* being white. *Daption capensis* and the little *Thalassidroma* are abundant. One specimen of *D. fuliginosa* has been with us all day; and now and then *Prion vittatus* and *Proc. mollis* appear.

September 24.—Off New Zealand (25 miles from land) two Gannets passed the ship—the first we have seen; and a Skua (*Lestris antarcticus*) flew round us yesterday. All the birds have left us but the *Daption capensis*, and that is scarce.

September 25. Steaming along the coast of New Zealand.—*Thalassidroma* ——? very plentiful. Flocks of a *Procellaria*, slate-coloured with dark markings. Gannets common, as also *Prion vittatus*. *D. melanophrys*? or an allied species (I think it looks smaller) sitting on the smooth water. Between the "Poor Knight's Islands" we steamed through large flocks of a curious little diver about the size of a quail, black and white, with apparently sharp-pointed, short bills. They dived under the ship,

* The "Mutton Bird" of Bass's Straits is *Puffinus brevicaudus*, Gould, B. Austr. vii. pl. 56. See 'Ibis,' 1859, p. 398. In the heading of Mr. Elwes' article it is erroneously named *P. obscurus*.—ED.

came up close under our counter, and then rose and flew just like Quails. Sir George says he knows them well, but cannot recall the name; he sent them to Mr. Gould some years ago, and I think I remember them being figured in his 'Birds of Australia.' Sir George says they are very local, this being their chief habitat; we saw no others either before or after passing these islands*.

September 26.—We anchored last night under Rangitoto, a large volcanic island in the mouth of the bay, and early this morning steamed to our berth off the town of Auckland. I saw two Gulls, one species much resembling the black-backed variety in Table Bay, but still I think different; also a Tern of some kind. The Gulls are common, and I see them inland about the fields.

In my next communication I hope to be able to say something of the land-birds round the town. As yet I have not been out with my gun, but there seems a dearth of specimens. I see a Kingfisher on the beach, and two small birds among the bushes in the ravines.

Auckland, New Zealand, Oct. 7th, 1861.

XIV.—*Observations on the Birds of the Western Districts of the Province of Nelson, New Zealand.* By JULIUS HAAST.

[MR. HAAST'S lately published Report of his expedition into the western districts of the province of Nelson, in the Middle Island of New Zealand†, contains an interesting chapter of observations on the animals noticed during the route, from which we extract the portion relative to the birds. After speaking of the paucity of Mammals‡, Mr. Haast continues as follows:—]

“The only living objects which give animation to these soli-

* No doubt the Diving Petrels, *Puffinuria urinatrix*, figured in Gould's 'Birds of Australia,' vii. pl. 60.—ED.

† 'Report of a Topographical and Geological Exploration of the Western Districts of the Nelson Province, New Zealand, undertaken for the Provincial Government.' By Julius Haast, Esq. Nelson, 1861. 1 vol. 8vo. 150 pp.

‡ Only two Mammals are known as really indigenous to New Zealand, both Bats, *Scotophilus tuberculatus* and *Mystacina tuberculata*.—ED.